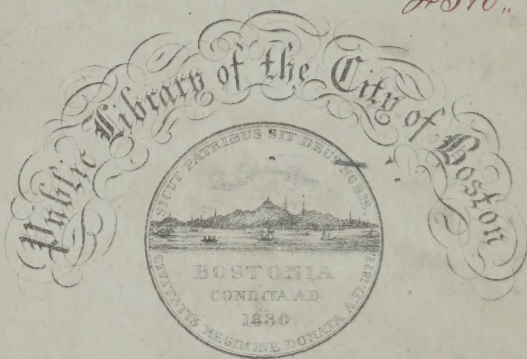




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WARNING FOR THE CRISIS.

OR

POPULAR ERRORS INVOLVED

IN THE

PRESENT WAR.

AN ADDRESS

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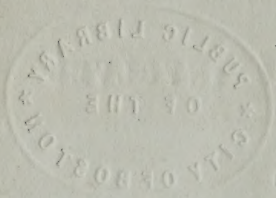
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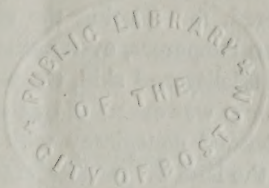
AT

Ottawa Illinois, February 2nd, 1863.

BY GEO. W. BASSETT.

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A

Warning for the Crisis.

By GEO. W. BASSETT.

In times of great danger to the commonwealth, the true patriot is not permitted to be silent. A citizen is morally accessory to all the evils of his country, which he has a neglected power to prevent. Hence the celebrated law of Solon, making *neutrality* not opposition a capital crime.

The cold and selfish expediency that will stand silent, and witness the desolations of country, rather than incur popular odium by a faithful attempt to resist and correct the evil, may secure what the world calls prosperity; but I say in the language of one of England's old patriots, "that the gaining of an office or a little money, is a poor reward for destroying a nation."

It is no excuse to a virtuous mind, that by resisting the popular current of madness and bigotry, he is subject to insult and even violence, because love of country is supreme in his breast. He would rather incur the bitterest hate of those whom he deems the enemies of the public weal, than fail to serve that public with incorruptable fidelity.

Besides, such has ever been the sad experience of true patriotism, in distinction from political legerdemain.

Aristedes the Just was banished by a deluded populace from the Athens which he had too faithfully served. Socrates was judicially murdered, for uttering the sentiments of true virtue. Under the Roman Emperors, even military success was fatal in a commander, and fidelity and skill, the very cause of degradation. The virtuous Seneca was executed by the ingrate Nero, on a false charge of a pretended conspiracy with Piso. And come down to old England, the land of patriots, statesmen and divines; see her most immaculate and revered patriot, and the profoundest political philosopher of the world, submit his neck to the block on a charge of treason, under that judicial monster Jeffries, for no earthly offence but incorruptable political integrity.

The most of the old prophets, who were no less statesman, experienced violent deaths by an ungrateful country. Indeed, in the world's history, true patriotism has almost always been called treason; while loyalty has generally meant sycophancy, and more often the betrayal of country, than devotion to its true interests.

Loyalty is a word seldom used except when the abuses of government are opposed and contested by an injured people, and then it generally signifies a selfish subserviency to such abuses. At such times, it is generally the true patriots, who are branded as traitors.

My countrymen, you know not what you say, when with such indecent levity, you brand as traitors, the men that you know in your veriest heart, love their country with an unquenchable devotion. You evince a lack of an intelligent acquaintance with history, both sacred and secular. Ah! The age seldom knows its true friends. Men love oppression and kiss the tracks of power. They hate and vilify the true friend that will not deceive them for his life, and voluntarily exalt over them the very men who flatter, only to deceive and oppress.

For months past, I have believed what I here declare, that the public mind of our country at the present unhappy period, is impregnated and poisoned with error. Not only the speeches of demagogues and the teachings of the News-press, but all the higher departments of literature and even the religious pulpit, are almost unanimous tributaries to that overwhelming flood of popular delusion which submerges and desolates the land.

Honestly believing that these errors are the prolific source of our present woes, I see no way by which I can serve my

country so effectively and so appropriately, as by an humble effort to enumerate and correct some of the most prominent and destructive of those errors.

I shall hope incidentally to suggest some principles of political truth, which may aid in forming an intelligent judgment of the present condition of our country.

THE LIFE OF THE NATION.

I will commence with the assumption that the life of the nation consists in its territorial domain.

It is said that the secession of the Southern States, is an attack upon the "life of the nation." It is maintained that in order to save the "national life," the "rebellion" must be put down at any cost, even at the expense of the constitution, and if need be by the exercise of absolute despotism, yes! the sacrifice of the last dollar and the last man.

As an example of the extravagant lengths to which this error is carried, and as a specimen of the dominant madness and fanaticism of the day, I will quote from a resolution read and applauded at a great war meeting held in Washington on the 6th of August last, at which the President of the United States was present and made a short speech. Its language is, "rather than witness the overthrow of the Union, we would prosecute the present war, until our homes and cities should be reduced to ashes, our fields should be desolated, and we and all that are dear to us, should have perished with our possessions. Let the Union be preserved, or the country be made a desert. (*applause.*)"

I believe the history of mind affords no instance of popular mania, that surpasses this in extravagance and absurdity.

The credit of originating the phrase "national life," is due I think, to a prominent American philanthropist, who not long since expressed himself as quite impatient with the President of the United States, because he did not wholly throw aside the Constitution, when in competition with what he called the life of the Nation. And the President himself, with members of Congress and public speakers innumerable, have followed him and each other in the use of the same expression. Daniel S. Dickenson, though not using the same phraseology, recently said in Boston, that governments might resort to absolute despotism, in order to perpetuate their existence and authority over their domain.

But it seems to me, these gentlemen have a most material and unworthy apprehension of what constitutes the life of a nation.

Not so thought our illustrious ancestry, when they cheerfully abandoned kindred and country, for the dangers of the ocean and the hardships and trials of a savage wilderness.

What sought the Puritans of New England, the Cavaliers of Virginia and the Carolina's, and the Roman Catholics of Maryland, in this remote and unexplored land? What constituted the germ or vital element of their new nationality? Was it the wilderness around them, or the principles within them? Was it the limitless domain of mountains, plains, rivers and lakes, or was it political freedom the inalienable right of self-government?

So of the unconquerable Hollanders, when their physical domain was nearly overrun by the invading hosts of France and England, they had collected their entire fleet in their harbor, in order to transfer their nation to the East Indies, rather than lose their freedom.

Glorious little Athens too, the land of POETRY, ELOQUENCE AND THE ARTS, regarded her "national life" as different from any particular domain, when her free citizens abandoned their picturesque and favorite peninsula before the countless hordes of Persia, and literally transferred their nation to their ships.

Not so judged the immortal hero of the *Æneid*, when he seized his aged Father Anchises, and bore him with his family and household gods from vanquished and burning Troy, and committed himself and treasures to the unknown destiny of the winds and waves, thus preserving the vital element of the proudest Republic of the world.

Does it take Canada, British Columbia, the East and West Indies and more or less of Asia to constitute the life of the English nation? Would that life be extinguished if each and all of these provinces should secede and become independent nations? How unworthy of England is such an assumption!

The life of the English nation consists in the principles of constitutional liberty, which have been wrested from the reluctant hand of tyranny and usurpation, by more than a thousand years of patient, brave and heroic exertion. It consists not in her limitless domain, on which the sun never sets, but in her *Liberty of Speech*, her *Free Press*, her *Habeas Corpus* and trial by Jury, and the general right of popular self-government.

These with their kindred rights and consequent virtues, constitute the life, or vital element of the English nation.

Yet the degrading notion is assumed in our country, that if the Slave States leave the protection of the United States Government, and undertake the function of independent self-government, it would destroy the life of our nation! How feeble an element must that life have become, to be thus dependent and precarious! How nearly extinguished by other causes, must the national life have become, to be terminated by such an event.

Fellow Citizens! mark this. Your National life consists not in the Southern States, but in the glorious principles of political *freedom*, which are embodied in the Constitution of the United States.

It is for the inviolable maintainance of *these*, that you must shed your blood if you would fight for the life of the nation, and not to subjugate a part of the old Union to the dominion of the other part. This will surely extinguish the national life.

When the Constitution of our country is suspended, and the principles of American Freedom are officially stricken down, the national life is gone, whether our territory be diminished or increased.

Where is the life of our free Confederacy, when political prisoners are pining in dungeons by the dictum of "one man, when the Writ of Habeas Corpus is suspended by the executive, a *free press* demolished by the authority of the administration, and patriots are obliged to talk in guarded whispers of the ruin of a once happy and glorious people?

Such being our condition, if we could retain all of our vast domain, and even the name of a Republic, with a nominal president and two houses of Congress, the old United States of America, would not be *alive*. It would not be a living agency, with the warm and beneficent pulsations of health, sending peace, happiness and prosperity, through every member of the body politic; but it would be a vast dead carcass, *galvanized* into political contortions, by the wand of despotic power.

The process proposed, is simply saving the territory at the cost of the government. It is called "saving the life of the nation." But it is like saving the life of an individual by taking away his breath—or extinguishing the vital principle.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

It is maintained by many and assumed by nearly all of our public speakers, that the secession of the Southern States, is an attempt to destroy, and if successful *will* destroy the "best government in the world."

Now as I apprehend this subject, the Confederate States have made no attack upon our government *whatever*, but simply left its *protection*. The President of the Confederate States says in one of his official messages, that they seek no interference *whatever* with the principles of our government, not even *compromise*, much less *conquest*. Their going out of the Union, does not effect the nature and operations of the old government, but only limits its sphere. The government may become even more perfect in its operations.

Look at first principles. What constitutes the destruction of a government? A thing may be said to be destroyed, when it is rendered useless for the end for which it was made—when its *functions* are destroyed or perverted.

A watch is destroyed, when it is so deranged as not to keep time. It has a physical existence as a metallic substance, but as a measure of time, it is destroyed. It is spoiled so as to be useless for the purpose of its creation.

So a government is destroyed, when it ceases to answer the end of its establishment, viz: the protection of the rights and happiness of the citizen. It may still be a source of aggrandizement to aspiring demagogues, but as to all the *essential* and *legitimate* ends of government, it is destroyed.

Hence the only possible destruction of our government, is the suspension or violation of our constitutional rights. This is so far forth, the destruction of the government. This is official Revolution! It is suspending the old government, and extemporizing a *new* one, by *executive usurpation*.

You may still retain the name and most of the *forms*, of the old system, but really have a *new government*, imposed upon you by the executive.

The Roman Republic was not overthrown by the revolt of her provinces, or diminution of her immense domain, but by the official invasion of the Constitutional rights of Roman Citizens. This was the identical process of the destruction of that Illustrious

Republic, and the inauguration of the Empire. So of the destruction of the young Republic of France, by the present Imperial usurpation. It was done by the exercise of arbitrary power, in arresting and imprisoning all of the incorruptable patriots who were supposed to stand in the way of such usurpation.

Fellow Citizens! There is no victory which the Confederates could achieve over your arms, which would constitute such a humiliating triumph over you, and which would be such a stab at the vitals of your government, as the popular or official suppression of the freedom of speech; in my estimation, the very noblest function of an American freeman. If we are true to our own Constitutional rights, we may bid defiance to all external foes. It is not President *Davis* that has the power to destroy our government, but *President Lincoln*.

Lord Chatham said "This I know, that where law ends, there tyranny begins;" and again, "No man more than I, respects the *just* authority of the house of commons—no man would go farther to defend it. But beyond the *line* of the Constitution, like every exercise of arbitrary power, it becomes illegal, threatening tyranny to the people, destruction to the state." And still again he exclaims, "Rather than the Constitution should be tamely given up, and our birthright surrendered to a *despotic minister*, I hope my Lords, old as I am, that I shall see the question brought to an issue, and fairly tried before the people and the government."—and yet will you brand the immortal Chatham as a traitor, because in a war with the American Colonies, he did not sustain the administration at the cost of his government? The simple truth is, the Confederate States have neither the power, nor the wish to destroy our government; and if our free institutions shall survive the present unfortunate administration and the American people shall learn the true lesson of events, it is to be hoped that we shall emerge from this ordeal a wiser and happier people.

Look at it, gentlemen,—you make war upon the South, because you assert that they violate the Constitution of the United States, and for *no other reason*. Yet by yourself suspending that constitution, you not only follow their example and commit the identical offence, but literally sanction all that they have done. If our government suspends the constitution whether on the plea of military necessity or any other, you give the most perfect licence to the act of secession. There is no government of the

United States except what is expressed in the constitution, and when you swerve from the rules of that sacred instrument, your government and Union is dissolved. On your own theory therefore, you have no more business to subject the South, than they have to subject you, if you violate or suspend the constitution. Both belligerents are on precisely *equal terms*, except, that our antagonists have the plea of having thrown off the Constitution of the United States and adopted another, while we acknowledge the supremacy and binding obligation of that instrument, and can advance no such plea.

“THE DESECRATION OF THE AMERICAN FLAG.”

We hear it said that the flag of our country is dishonored and trampled in the dust by traitors. But let us look again at first principles, and see who has been guilty of this sacrilege? What is the flag of the United States? Every intelligent man knows that it is the emblem of constitutional liberty. It symbolizes the constitutional rights of an American citizen. Of course when these rights are violated under the flag, that flag is desecrated—it is dishonored—it is trailed in the dust. It is not by leaving the protection of that flag, that a people dishonor it, but by profanely trampling upon those sacred rights of freemen which it symbolizes. If under that flag the *army* strikes down the great American right of self-government, it dishonors that flag. If the Executive usurps the exclusive, and that only the *implied* power of Congress, by suspending the writ of Habeas Corpus, and thrusts American freeman into those noted institutions of despotism—political prisons, for the expression of opinion, and violates the liberty of the Press, I say most emphatically, *He* desecrates the Flag of his country and profanely trails it in the dust!

The Constitution of the United States declares expressly that “Congress shall make no laws abridging the freedom of speech or of the press,” yet we have men in our community who trample upon free speech, and condemn a free press, and yet claim to be patriots, or rather *loyalists* for I will not impute to them such arrogance as to claim real patriotism—but they freely brand as traitors to their country, those who boldly maintain these rights. Some of them have done all they could to inaugurate a reign of terror, which should denounce, threaten and if possible

imprison all who would not become slaves to the dominant madness of the times.

The Governor of this State has perjured himself, and disgraced the commonwealth, by publicly assuring a person that if he would shoot down his fellow-citizen like a dog, for pulling down the flag of the United States, he would pardon him for the offence, thus officially licensing murder and lawless riot!

Now who is most to be abhorred, and who deserves the severest chastisement, the foolish and thoughtless private citizen, who in the excitement of a paltry neighborhood quarrel, pulls down the mere emblem of freedom, or the sworn governor of a great commonwealth, who not only tramples upon the great constitutional rights, which are symbolized by the American Flag, but violates and dishonors the very spirit of all good government, and recklessly resolves society into the wild chaos of barbaric violence? This I call the greatest desecration of the American Flag. This is treason of fearful magnitude! *These* men are the real enemies of our government; they are traitors indeed. Many of them *boldly conspire* to overthrow the government of our Fathers. They cry out for a strong government, that is able to cope with the hoary dynasties of Europe, as well as with internal rebellion; just as the stupid Jews rejected the simple democracy by the Judges, and demanded a King, that they might rival their heathen neighbors. And so successful have these conspirators been, that in less than two years of political power, their policy has imposed upon the country an army of frightful magnitude, a crushing and fatal public debt, a practical system of government espionage, with distressing taxes, and most of the essential characteristics of the strongest monarchies of Europe. And what I regard as our great *present* peril, is, the conversion of this beautiful and happy sisterhood of Sovereign States, into one great consolidated, presidential, but despotic monarchy, with that fatal enemy of peace and liberty, a standing army to enforce popular submission.

“THE SUSPENDING OF THE CONSTITUTION IN TIME OF WAR.”

The sentiment has become quite current that the constitution of the country, may be suspended by the Executive in time of war. This doctrine I look upon as the most absurd and dangerous of all the political heresies of the day.

The very time of all others when a people need the guidance and protection of great principles of constitutional wisdom and right, is when the turbulent passions of war are let loose in a great storm of public excitement.

When a ship is rolling upon a stormy sea, and driven before the winds, does a faithful pilot throw away his compass and neglect his chart, and extemporize the ship's course? Of all other times, he is then most careful and ceaseless in consulting those essential guides of wisdom and experience. So I maintain that a time of war, is the very crisis when rulers should be held most rigidly within their constitutional restraints. Surely the people are infatuated, when they call for the sacrifice of the blood-bought principles of justice and wisdom, embodied in the constitution, in order to protract their dominion over a paltry piece of territory! I am truly alarmed at the popular levity, which I discover in high places and low, in regard to constitutional sanctions.

The principles of the constitution are to the government, what the principles of virtue are to the individual. They are not to be abandoned or violated to protract a mere physical existence. The great Sidney said, when solicited to compromise his manhood for his safety, "I have ever had in my mind, that when "God should cast me into such a condition, as that I cannot save "my life, but by doing an indecent thing, he shows me the time "is come wherein I should resign it."

Our government was never designed to live after it ceased to protect the rights of the citizen. Indeed the very violation of those rights, is itself the death of the government, as the sacrifice of one's integrity, constitutes the moral death of a man. If *any* department of government, can properly suspend the constitution, it must be the legislative, because, it most directly and extensively expresses the popular voice. But Jefferson says, "Congress has *not* unlimited powers to provide for the general "welfare, but are *restrained* to those *specifically enumerated*." Daniel S. Dickinson on the other hand, recently said in Boston, that "governments may resort to *absolute despotism* to maintain "their authority and existence." If this new doctrine of the suspension of the written constitution in the time of war prevail, what has any tyrant or selfish faction to do, in order to warrant usurpation, but to plunge the country into war. The ship of

state is then cut loose from her moorings, and is adrift upon the stormy sea of selfish passion, a legitimate prey to any traitorous arm that may have power to wield her helm to his own selfish ends. A republic may be thus changed into a kingdom, an empire, or an absolute despotism, by simply getting the country into a war.

What intelligent observer, native or foreign, can have failed to discover the frightful tendency of the present unfortunate war to shipwreck our free institutions upon the fatal rock of consolidation?

Of all periods when discretion is least to be trusted without written guides and restraints, is during the excitement of war. It is then that men are most notoriously wanting in discretion, moderation and justice. War is preeminently the empire of might and passion, rather than of justice and reason. It is a literal repeal of the ordinary laws of morality, and a public licence of every lust. Yet these sapient souls,—these modern political sages, propose to suspend the written constitution in time of war, and to obey the impulse of the dominant passion. But let me ask where the constitution of our country has made any exception or qualification in its imperial requirements. It is all as binding in war as in peace, and infinitely more needful. Does the solemn oath that binds all departments of the government, to fidelity to the constitution, lose any of its sacredness in the time of war? Is it any the less perjury to violate the constitution in war than in peace? Ah! this doctrine is rank treason. It seems to me like a spontaneous conspiracy of a mighty faction, inflamed with selfish passion to overthrow the government of our Fathers, and destroy our constitutional liberties.

“MILITARY NECESSITY.”

But I am here startled with the desperate plea of “*military necessity!*” I have heard a lawyer maintain before a popular audience, that in time of war military necessity was indeed the *measure and rule of legality*. But in my apprehension, this plea constitutes a shield broad enough to cover, and has covered every possible crime against civil liberty. Nay! it has *bathed the earth in the blood of her patriots*.

Why did Louis Napoleon, when erecting his imperial throne upon the ruins of the young Republic which he had betrayed,

arrest every constitutional patriot, which he could not corrupt, and either confine him in prison, or banish him from his country? O! It was military necessity! What authorized the terrible massacres of that triumvirate of blood and cruelty, Robespierre, Danton and Marat, in the old French Revolution of 1793! Only *military necessity*.

Why did Richard III murder the infant princes, except from military necessity, that they might not live to contest his usurpation? All the sanguinary cruelties of the Roman Emperors Tiberius, Nero and Caligula, which mark the blackest Era of civil history, and which is truly depicted only by the pen of a Tacitus; were *military necessities*.

When that noted Triumvirate of Rome, Anthony, Octavius and Lepidus, each, in order to propitiate his associate and rival, sacrificed to his revenge his own personal friends, and even kindred, of which proscription the immortal Cicero was a victim; the *only* plea for such cruel and unnatural perfidy, was this same *military necessity*!

So of the great head aristocrat, Sylla, at an earlier period of the Republic, when having vanquished the popular party at Rome, he congregated eight thousand leading Democrats in the public circus, and slaughtered them like swine; and when the Senate whom he was addressing startled by their cries, asked the cause, he coolly remarked—"Be composed and attend to the business for which you are called. What you hear is no more than the cries of a few wretches who are suffering the punishment due to their crimes!" What law of that illustrious Republic, authorized this wholesale butchery? O! it was *military necessity*!!!

Gentlemen, are you aware that all history execrates your plea, and warns you of its *deadly fruits*? Why my Fellow Citizens, your leaders, who offer this tyrants' plea, are either blind to the great warning lights of history; or else the *blackest traitors that ever conspired against the liberties of a confiding, but deluded people*!

I will sanction my apprehension, by only adding on this point, the opinion of an able—disinterested, and affectionate observer of our political institutions, M. DeTocqueville says, "No protracted war can fail to endanger the freedom of a democratic country. Not indeed that after every victory it is to be

“apprehended that the victorious Generals will possess themselves by force of the Supreme power, after the manner of Sylla and Cæsar: the danger is of another kind. War does not always give over democratic communities to military government, but it must invariably and immeasurably increase the powers of civil government; it must almost compulsorily concentrate the direction of all men and the management of all things in the hands of the administration. If it lead not to despotism by sudden violence, it prepares men for it more gently by their habits. *All those* who seek to destroy the liberties of a democratic nation, ought to know that war is the surest and shortest means to accomplish it. *This is the first axiom of the science.*”

I ask then if after what we have witnessed of official perjury and Executive usurpation, during the current war, if there is not abundant cause for apprehension, to the mind of every considerate patriot?

“THE PRINCIPLES OF SELF-GOVERNMENT.”

One of the strangest errors of the times, and expressed in many of the speeches of the day, is, that the Seceded States are warring against the principles of self-government and constitutional liberty. The President of the United States in his recent address to the army of the Potomac after its disastrous repulse at Fredricksburg, speaks of ours as the “cause of *popular government.*” The same assumption is in the mouth of nearly every Northern advocate of the war.

Now, if there is any truth that history demonstrates beyond ambiguity—if there is any right which has cost more patriot blood than all others—if there is any interest of supreme value to our race—if there is any cause that has given moral grandeur to the field of battle, or true glory to the dying soldier; it is *the right of the people of any given territory absolutely to control their own political destiny.* For this our Fathers fought and suffered seven long dark years, against the arrogant claims of legitimacy and the divine right of Kings.

But if I be answered, that the majority must rule; I ask, the majority of what territory? Shall it include the whole world, or one continent, with all contiguous Islands? Or shall the boundaries of a nationality be determined by the free choice of the people of the territory in question? Evidently the latter—and in no other way. The consequences of a different theory are manifestly fatal. It would subject the limits of every nationality

to the absurd and dangerous empire of the sword.

Practically, who shall decide whether Canada shall unite with us under the old Flag of Liberty and Union? Shall England? She now disclaims the purpose or wish. Shall the United States? This would be only *conquest*. Or shall the inhabitants of Canada—the territory in question determine this? You will say the latter of course. So of Cuba' or Central America. The people of the territory in question, must determine their own political destiny, undisturbed by foreign compulsion. *This* and this *only* is the essence of *National Liberty*.

But it is said that the States of our Union, have entered into a limitless compact, and therefore have alienated this right of Independence, by voluntary covenant? Let it be answered first, that sovereignty is *inalienable*. It inheres in man's very being and forms one of those high responsibilities, that is inseparable from his nature.

But hear Jefferson on this point., He says, "A generation may "bind itself as long as its majority continues in life. When that "has disappeared, another majority is in place, holds all the "rights and powers their predecessors once held, and may change "their laws and institutions to suit themselves. Nothing then is "unchangeable," says the immortal sage of Monticello, but the inherent and unalienable rights of man." The old doctrine of the theologians was, that, "In Adam's fall we sinned *all*," and a clerical wit in order to ridicule the absurdity of the sentiment, added the equally philosophical couplet—"In Cain's *murder*, we sinned *further*!" The common sense truth is, that one generation cannot bind another, against their own rights—interests or will, any more than a man could sin, six-thousand years before he existed. I look upon this doctrine of the right of the people of any given territory, absolutely to control their own political destiny, subject only to natural justice, as not only the legitimate antagonist and effective remedy of governmental oppression and abuse; but as the great practical peace doctrine of the world. Peace is not the mere sentiment of the heart, with no underlying truth to support it; but is the natural consequence of a practical truth. It is the fruit of an idea. It is based alone on the concession of rights. The denial of rights is itself a declaration of war. It is war. Nothing less, nothing more. If this doctrine of popular supremacy were practically inaugurated, it would

substitute the ballot box for the bayonet, and nearly if not quite dispense with the calamities of war.

Jefferson Davis says truly in a message, that the Confederate States cannot have a war between themselves because they reject the doctrine of coercion, as applied to sovereign states. So our fearful war could have been wholly avoided, and we now the happiest people on earth, and the United States the most honored of all governments, if we had magnanimously conceded the same great right of popular supremacy. And I may suggest here, that this war at last can be settled on no other principle.

Look at it! If the people of every given territory were left free to control their own political destiny, how could international wars exist? Certainly there never could be a war of boundary or conquest: and these in some form have been the most frequent causes of war. If this sacred and inalienable right of national Independence at the desire of the people, were uncontested, men might everywhere beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and the nations would learn war no more. No husband and father would be called to leave an anxious wife and weeping children to endure the hardships of the camp, and to hazard the casualties of the battle-field. No fond mother would weep her life away over the untimely death of a cherished son, nor father be doomed to the desolation of a sonless old age. But every man surrounded by a hopeful and unbroken family, would "sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest or intimidate him." Such in my apprehension is the infinite beneficence and moral grandeur of the doctrine of *popular sovereignty*.

Gentlemen, I must quench my fondest aspirations for the peace and welfare of my race,—I must unlearn all the great lessons of history—cease to venerate its most illustrious heroes—and defame the character of the glorious men of '76 as traitors and rebels, if I fail to admire the unsurpassed heroism and self-sacrifice of the people of the Confederate States of America, in maintaining this great natural right of Independence—self-government and popular sovereignty.

When I see the fair ladies of a country tear up the bedding of their families to make shirts for their soldiers—and converting their carpets into blankets for the tented field, and turning their drawing rooms into hospitals and themselves into nurses; and

especially when I see those soldiers marching bare-footed, ragged and hungry from battle to battle, and when I see the spirit of heroism rising higher and loftier by every successive sacrifice; I tell you that rather than withhold the expression of my admiration and sympathy from such a people, I would endure the darkest prison that tyranny ever erected for an oppressed race!

And yet we are told that the Confederates are warring against self-government; and that the Federals represent popular rights!! Do you say this is treason? Algernon Sidney said of the period of Charles the second, "We live in an age that makes *truth* pass for *treason*." But persons show their ignorance of the great lessons of history, not less than their *servility*, when they make such an insinuation.

Was that illustrious friend of America, Lord Chatham, guilty of treason? Did any Englishman—did the veriest court-sycophant that hung around the British throne, have the effrontery to charge him with anything short of the loftiest philanthropy, as well as the truest patriotism, when he said in tones that made the crown quiver on the brow of tyranny, "I rejoice that America *has* resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of Liberty, as voluntarily to let themselves be made slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest." Suggestive words to Northern freemen! And again—"If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms—never! never! never!"—No American *dare* call those the words of a traitor.

"CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY."

But how is it with the cause of Constitutional Liberty? What is Constitutional Liberty? Is it not the secure enjoyment by a people of their inherent and inalienable rights, under a constitution of their own choice? Junius commences his immortal letters with the sentiment that "The submission of a *free people* to the executive authority of government, is no more than a compliance with laws which they themselves have enacted."

Will it be maintained on the other hand, by any respectable American, that a people whose political conduct and destiny is controlled by a constitution not of their own choice, but imposed upon them by military force, are enjoying their constitutional liberty? It matters not whether the usurping power deems the provisions of that Constitution beneficent or not—If its authori

ty is not based upon the consent of the governed, it is in direct conflict with the first axiom of American politics.

Now where is found the self-imposed constitutional obligation of a State to remain in the Union any longer than its citizens choose? Where is the Constitutional authority of the general government to hold a State in the Union against the consent and will of its free citizens?

On this vital and momentous question, the Constitution of the United States is designedly—wisely—and *consistently* silent. And you know that this venerated document itself declares, that “The *powers not* delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are *reserved* to the *States respectively*, or to the people.” I believe the Fathers of the Republic were unanimous in the view that the general government had no power to coerce a State by military force. Madison, Jefferson and even Hamilton, are specific, and predict the most fatal results, from any such attempt.

Even John Quincy Adams, who will be acknowledged the best authority by the advocates of coercion, in his message to Congress in 1823 says, “The United States of America, and the people of *each State* of which they are composed, are each of them *sovereign powers*. Each is sovereign within its own province. The case of a conflict between these two powers, has not been supposed; nor has any provision been made for it in our institutions.”

The evident design and expectation of the framers of our government was, that the Union, based as it was conceded to be upon consent, and not upon conquest, was to be dissolved without violence or blood, whenever such consent were withdrawn.

Having fought and suffered seven years of want and woe, to establish a free government, based expressly on the consent of the governed, will any reverent descendant, impute to those illustrious men so glaring an inconsistency as to constitute a system of government, on the very opposite principle of compulsion, and especially when they have the ineffacible record of their own express disclaimer.

This feature of the consent of the governed, really constitutes the cardinal and glorious difference between our free institutions and the iron-bound monarchies of Europe.

Now with this view of the subject, which of the belligerents in the present war, represents Constitutional Liberty? Is it not

evident, that while the Confederates are contending for the right to leave a Union which they cease to prefer, and to form a government of their own choice; *we* are not only fighting confessedly to *subjugate* a free people, and to force upon them a government against their consent, but we ruthlessly strike down the Constitutional Liberties of our own community, and render ourselves political slaves, by a fruitless, Utopian and absurd attempt to enslave our neighbors.

Hence I must *declare*, as the irresistible deduction of my *reason*, that whatever you may say of the subject of personal liberty, as against chattel slavery, a matter not directly in issue, the Confederates are contending for the Constitutional rights and liberties of the States, while we are fighting for the doctrines of consolidation and European absolutism,—suggesting most forcibly the prophetic apprehensions of Jefferson, who wrote in 1826, these words. “I see as you do, with the deepest affliction, the rapid strides with which the Federal branch of our government is advancing towards the usurpation of all rights reserved by the States, and the *consolidation* in itself of all powers, foreign and domestic, and that too, by the constructions which if legitimate, leave no limits to their power.”

“THE RESPONSIBILITY.”

I heard it said not long since in a public address, and I suppose it may be the popular belief, that the secession of the Southern States had *caused* the infinite calamities of the present war—the death of a quarter of a million of American citizens, and the accumulation of a public debt of unknown millions, with all the dreadful and inestimable collateral effects of bereavement, distress and general calamity.

Now when I heard this assertion, I could not but reflect how differently men view the same subject! If you consider the historical fact that the Southern States had seceded from the Federal Union, and organized a separate Confederacy, chosen their officers, and sent their commissioners to treat amicably with the old government, expressing in a distinct article of their provisional government, to use its very language, the most “earnest desire to adjust everything pertaining to the common property, common liabilities and common obligations of that Union upon principles of right, justice, equality and good faith,” all before there was a gun fired, or one drop of blood shed; it must be the imperial decision of logic itself, that it was *not* the act of *secession*.

but the unfortunate attempt to resist and put down secession by military force, that has wrought this immense slaughter and ruin. It is literally impossible for my intellect to arrive at any other conclusion. Nor can I deem it necessary for your minds, that I more than *state the truth*, in order to refute the error.

“REBELLION.”

A popular error, which seems peculiarly inconsistent for Americans to entertain, is the assumption that the secession of the Southern States, is “a *rebellion*.”

I deny most confidently that it is a rebellion, or partakes at all of the *nature* of “a rebellion.” And here let me refer to an authority sanctioned by two centuries of history, and hallowed by the scaffold of *tyranny*, which is the scaffold of *glory*, and by the unaffected reverence of six generations of most intelligent and admiring worshippers. Algernon Sidney said two-hundred years ago, that “those who seek after *truth*, will easily find, that “there can be no such thing in the world as a *rebellion* of a “nation against its *own magistrates*.”

Look at it, fellow citizens, it is an undying truth, that of all others, Americans should not controvert, that the people inhabiting any given territory, are the supreme political authority of that territory. In defence and ratification of this truth, as I said before, there has been more genuine patriot blood shed than for all others, and in violation of which the world has *always* groaned under oppression. If then the people of any given territory, are the sovereign, or highest political authority of that territory, (and if they are not, who *are*?) then how can they be guilty of rebellion? Can the sovereign authority be said to *rebel* against itself? You know it is absurd. Rebellion, implies the resistance of a subordinate, to his superior. But Jefferson utters a glorius truth when he says, “The people en masse are independent of all *but moral law*. They are politically competent to “whatever is not a violation of natural justice.”

In defence of this great fundamental right, our fathers toiled and fought seven years under the tyrannical charge of “rebellion:” And I confess that when I hear those who are ignorant of the simplest principles of political truth—principles that in the French Revolution were in the mouth of every peasant, contemptuously branding men as rebels, for no act but maintaining this great national right of popular self-government, I feel that the memory

of our Revolutionary ancestors is dishonored by a *thoughtless* and *degenerate* posterity.

The South have been guilty of no political crime whatever, in withdrawing from the Union and setting up an independent government. They have only exercised an inalienable right of mankind. It is but a legitimate exercise of human Sovereignty. If they are said to be guilty of moral crime in holding slaves, we are equally guilty, and propose to remain forever so, if they will consent. Nay! we are shedding these rivers of blood, in order to perpetuate that very relation. But as to the charge of Rebellion, it is absurd. Rebellion! Why, the political world has ever been regenerated by what was miscalled rebellion. In this sense, nearly all the enshrined heroes of the past, have been *rebels*. The glorious temple of Liberty, has been erected and adorned by rebels. When Lord North branded our own brave Montgomery as a *rebel*, Charles Fox, the magnanimous friend of the seceded colonies, retorted in these memorable words, "The term rebel is no certain mark of disgrace. All the great assertors of Liberty, the saviours of their country, the *benefactors* of mankind in all ages, have been called rebels."

And I may add to this audience, we owe the very flag of our country, with all the glorious rights which it symbolizes to a stupendous Rebellion!

"THE REAL ALTERNATIVE."

I often hear it said by the speakers of the day, that "if we do not conquer the south, they will conquer us—that if Jefferson Davis is not made our political subject, we shall be made his political slave." Now it would be discreditable to the heart of those gentlemen, to ascribe this humiliating assertion to anything else than thoughtlessness. There is not a shadow of foundation in history, or testimony to warrant such an assumption. That is not the alternative. We have not only the positive and repeated disclaimer of the President of the Confederate States, but all the world *knows* that our antagonists are fighting for political Independence, and nothing else. That is the specific issue and conceded to be such by both governments. Why then play upon the feelings, of an excited and credulous public, with such a false and childish bugbear. It is unworthy of a public speaker.

The true alternative is that either the contested right of Independence and self-government, will be maintained against the old doctrine of absolutism and the divine right of kings—or else every American citizen is a political slave, and the last hope of civil liberty is blasted.

“THE EFFECT OF SEPARATION, ON NATIONAL PEACE AND PERSONAL LIBERTY.”

It is assumed further, that a separation of these states into two or more confederacies, would involve the existence of ceaseless war, and the destruction of our liberties. I find in the Chicago Daily Tribune of Oct. 21st,—62, this paragraph.

“SENTIMENTS OF MR. SEWARD.”

Washington Oct; 14th, 1862.

To James Parker and others, Mott Haven N. Y.

You ask for words to encourage enlistments. I give them. The *United States*—the greatest of all nations if they stand together—the most miserable if they fall asunder.

William H. Seward.

Now let us quote by the side of this the opinion of one whom history has long since pronounced great; Jefferson says, “Whether we remain in one confederacy, I believe not very important to the happiness of either part, and did I now foresee a separation at some day, yet I should feel the duty and the desire to promote the Western interests as zealously as the Eastern, doing all the good for both portions of our future family which should fall within my power.” How unlike the spirit of the present war, is this magnanimous sentiment, of the great representative of American democracy! It seems to me that a limited knowledge of history, with but little reflection, would decide one’s judgment in favor of the sentiment of Jefferson, rather than that of Mr. Seward. There is no truth more abundantly demonstrated in history, than that a large and increasing national domain, under one consolidated government, of whatever form, both tempts and provokes hostility and always in the end necessitates that fatal enemy of peace and liberty, a *standing army*. It seems to me, that treaty stipulations between contiguous and Independent nationalities of moderate extent, are far more favorable to the liberties of the citizen and to the cultivation of popular magnanimity, national forbearance and all the public virtues which adorn and happy a truly wise and

prosperous people; than the constitutional unity of a very extensive territory, (The President of the United States to the contrary, notwithstanding.)

I think it is evident, that the small nationalities of Central Europe, enjoy more perfect civil freedom, and greater exemption from the burdens of war and consequent taxation, than those vast and powerful empires which surround them.

How is it with the poor honest peasantry under the great military empires of Russia, Austria and France? Just at the dawn of their social existence, at the very period when they can, not only be a help and comfort under the parental roof, but when they should determine their social and industrial destiny for life, the fatal conscription lays hold upon them, and drags them off from parent, sister and perhaps wife, to spend their best days, amidst the hardships, dangers and corruptions of the camp and the field; while the happy laborers of the small Republics of Central Europe, are cultivating the arts of peace, and forming habits of beneficent industry, and laying the foundation for domestic happiness and substantial prosperity. Now I ask, who wants to inaugurate in our free country, all the degradation and cruelties of European conscription? Yet it is the inevitable result of the expansion of territory and the centralization of political power. Apprehending as I do, in the light of history, and the great principles of political philosophy, such a fearful destiny to which events are pushing us, I can not withhold my warning voice, though the dungeon threaten, and the scaffold frown! *

* Since expressing the above sentiment, my apprehensions have been more than realized, by an insane Congress imposing upon the country a conscription bill, with features not less odious than those of the worst monarchies of Europe.

I have only space here to name two or three of these features. It not only resolves our once free, happy and industrious country, into a great military Empire, making us a nation of slaves, subject to one master, but,

First with studied cruelty it throws the burden of the war upon the poor, by allowing the conscript to commute with the government, for the sum of three hundred dollars, thus virtually exempting the rich and offsetting the life of the poor man, against the three hundred dollars of the rich.

Second,—The industrious laborer, who with the aid of a frugal wife and self-denying family has secured a small homestead, will be constrained to mortgage or sell the same to some moneyed man, in order to raise the three hundred dollars; thus reducing his family to poverty, and throwing the land into the hands of the great capitalists—all tending directly to introduce into our country, both the landed aristocracy and the poor peasantry of the old world.

Third,—It naturally operates to increase the political power of the present administration, and to diminish that of the opposition, because the majority of those who are able to pay the three hundred dollars, would probably vote with the administration, while the majority of those who are unable to pay it, and must therefore give their lives to the war, would probably vote with the opposition, thus naturally diminishing the opposition vote.

On this vital and interesting point of the natural effect of territorial extent, upon the cause of freedom, I wish to confirm and sanction my views by a quotation from a foreign work, which its American editor says has already taken its stand with Montesquieu, Bacon, Milton and Locke. DeTocqueville[§] says: "Small nations have, therefore, ever been the cradle of political liberty; and the fact that many of them have lost their immunities by extending their dominion shows that the freedom they enjoyed was more a consequence of their inferior size, than of the character of the people." "The history of the world, he continues, affords no instance of a *great nation* retaining the form of a Republican government for a long series of years." But he adds in an explanatory or qualifying note,—“I do not speak of a confederation of small *Republics*, but of a great consolidated Republic.” Again he remarks: “All the passions which are most fatal to Republican institutions, spread with an increasing territory, while the virtues which maintain their dignity do not augment in the same proportion. It may, therefore, be asserted as a general proposition, that nothing is more opposed to the well-being and the freedom of man, than vast Empires.” And our own Patrick Henry, whose native intuitions were truly prophetic, remarks: “Those nations who have gone in search of grandeur, power and splendor, have fallen a sacrifice, and been the victims of their own folly. While they acquired these visionary blessings, they lost their freedom.” And the most youthful student of history knows that this is the lesson of the splendid career, and sad termination of the Republic of Rome.

I warn you my fellow men, that we have been tending towards the way of all the great nations of the earth. We have been unconsciously losing our liberties by the extension of our territory, and the centralization of political power. The usurpation and tyranny of the rulers, and *not* the ignorance and corruption of the masses, is the real danger of our times—the peril of the hour.

If our confederacy continued to expand by the addition of States to the Union, the only security to our liberties must be in the inviolable sovereignty of the individual states. The glorious system of a Union, or sisterhood of sovereign states, with the inalienable right of each to change her political relations at will, *conceded*, combines the freedom, happiness and security of a small Republic, with the glory, majesty and power of a great

Empire. But to make the expansion of our territory compatible with our liberties, we must preserve *inviolable* the sovereignty of the States, and resist with our last energies the revolutionary doctrine of consolidation. Not that I think we can *yet* realize this picture of confederate glory and public happiness under the late Union. This unfortunate war of consolidation, against state sovereignty, has rendered separation inevitable, and future re-union, at least very remote, if not eternally impossible. Indeed I feel that it has rolled back the wheels of political progress and reform, at least a half a century.

Now let me ask an intelligent and candid audience, are the advocates of the right of secession, disunionists and enemies of their country's greatness and true glory? I tell you in the light of this whole subject, No! Where is your Union and national glory under the auspices of coercion and consolidation? *Broken—dishonored*, and ruined before the world. The principles of political philosophy which I am endeavoring to unfold constitute the only practical Union doctrine. I see no necessary limits to the expansion of territory, on such principles of State freedom. They are admirably calculated to confederate and happyfy the whole civilized world. The murderous doctrine of Sumner, and a nameless throng of lesser lights, on the other hand, viz., that the general government possesses the power in any contingency to obliterate from the map of the world eleven states of this Union, constitutes a vast political bombshell, fired into the heart of our confederacy. This consolidation war has cost us all the Border States and the irreconcilable alienation of the original heptarchy, and, if persisted in, must inevitably disintegrate all that yet remain. It is the very mother, and efficient cause of disunion.

You see, therefore, that the most dangerous and practical disunionists of our country, have not been the theoretical aspirants for a southern empire or republic; much less that villified class of Northern citizens, who amidst personal obloquy, and general political apostacy, have firmly maintained the old Democratic doctrine of state sovereignty; but that other Northern influence which in violation of the principles of our government, and against the plain warnings of the Fathers, have unsheathed the fratricidal sword to coerce a unity of sovereign and independent states.

If the magnanimous advice of the illustrious Scott, in his letter to Mr. Seward, viz., to say to the Southern States, in case they determined to secede, "wayward sisters depart in peace," had been heeded by our administration, I am not sure that those wayward sisters would have left us at all. Such a magnanimous regard for the principles of government, and for the political freedom of the states, would have been a most potent, if not effectual influence to arrest the progress of disunion. Knowing that the remedy of a peaceful secession was always at hand, the disaffected states would have felt under no necessity to precipitate an event so fraught with unknown hazards, as an attempt to organize a separate confederacy.

In harmony with this view is the following extract of what purports to be a letter from the Hon. Jacob Thompson, Secretary of the Interior under Buchanan's administration. In a letter to the Ex-President, of June 7th, 1861, he says: "I feared that that blunderer, Lincoln, would turn and adopt my ideas of 'state rights. *Had he done so*, secessionism would have been *killed off forever*. Had Lincoln, in his inaugural, boldly taken 'the ground that he would evacuate the forts of Sumpter and 'Pickens, and leave the seceded states to determine for themselves their own destiny, the Border States would have been "secured to the old Union beyond peradventure, and in all the "seceded states there would have been a Union party which "would have asserted its ascendancy in all our states. This "feeling was deep and strong when I reached home. But the "very moment Lincoln suspended the constitution and the laws, "and undertook to raise armies and support navies without the "aid of Congress, the feeling for separation became *universal*. "Now nothing but annihilation will bring these states into the "old Union."

A CASE SUPPOSED.

In reference to a current popular sentiment of "unconditional Union," I will suppose a case that must come home to every American citizen with peculiar effect. When the distinguished Col. Baker, who fell pierced with a dozen bullets in the fearful slaughter of Ball's Bluff, was alive and discharging honorably his senatorial duties, enjoying the felicities of domestic life and general prosperity, with a heart bounding in aspirations for still higher distinctions; suppose the proposition had come to the American people, that either this Union of 34 States should be divided into two independant confederacies, related to each other

by the sanction of international treaties, instead of a constitutional compact ; or else the life of this estimable man should be sacrificed ; what would have been the reply ? I ask you, would not every man, in his then sober sense and calm reflection, have cried out with horror at the profane and unnatural suggestion, let the Union go rather than protect it at such a cost ? Yet now that the demon of war has fairly possessed the American mind, in their mad devotion to their bloody Moloch, they have not only lain this noble man in his early grave, but piled upon the altar over two hundred thousand American citizens, whose lives are equally dear to themselves and their families ! Yes ! In the madness of his delusion and revenge a prominent lawyer of this city was recently heard to say that “ rather that have the Southern confederacy succeed in establishing their independence he would have every man, *woman and child* in the Northern States perish from the earth ! ” And would you believe it, gentlemen, that, demon-like as the sentiment is, it is covered and sanctioned by a resolution adopted in a Republican Union Convention held in Springfield, Sept. 24, 1862, at which a citizen of this place presided. The resolution is as follows :

Resolved, That the maintenance of the government and the preservation of the National Unity is the great end and purpose of the present war, and to accomplish them the *rights of persons and property*, in all sections of the country, should be subordinate. Webster’s definition of subordinate is, “ to make or consider of less value or importance ; to make subject.” That is, the rights of every person, including life, liberty and property, may be destroyed if necessary in order to preserve the Union.— This is the definite idea expressed in that resolution beyond all controversy.

Now if you reflect upon the legitimate object of all government, you will see that the proposition expressed in this resolution would be true if it was directly reversed. The end of all true government and its *only* end, is the inviolable *protection* of the rights of persons and property. If a conspirator to overthrow our government and inaugurate a despotism, had drafted that resolution, he could not have more perfectly adapted it to his purpose. The truth is that legitimate governments are subordinate and subservient to the rights of persons and property ; and are overthrown by all free people the moment they in-

fringe upon those rights. Why did the Romans under the elder Brutus overthrow the kingdom, expel the Tarquins and inaugurate a Consular Republic? Because that government invaded the rights of persons and property. Would they have done it under the brave Romulus or the pious Numa? Not at all. Why did the English, in 1688, destroy the government of the Stewarts and finally establish the house of Hanover? Because they regarded their government as subordinate to the rights of persons and property. So when our Fathers, by an illustrious act of popular supremacy, overthrew the empire of Great Britain within the thirteen seceding colonies, they acted upon the same living principle of subordinating government to the rights of person and property. The everlasting truth is, and none but a slave will abandon it, that the government is the servant of the people.—But this Springfield Resolution, makes the people the slaves of the government. Nay! its victim at will. It is the alarming prevalence, and the practical domination of such slavish doctrines, that in my apprehension constitute the most discouraging phenomenon and the real danger of the present crisis.

“WE MUST FIGHT IT OUT!”

The sentiment, I fear, is somewhat current that although at the commencement of our difficulties, the only legitimate alternative presented to the Administration, was either a new compromise or a peaceable separation, and that the war policy was an error, yet now that we are in it, we “must fight it out and conquer our antagonists.” On this principle many seem to lend a sanction to the war, who really have no heart in it. Now this course is as bad in morals as it has hitherto proved calamitous in policy. But it seems to me that the principle is sufficiently condemned by the ordinary prudence of men in the common affairs of life.—When a person is in the wrong in any transaction or enterprise, if he is magnanimous and truly wise he will retreat from his position. Many a fool has ruined himself by the opposite course. Especially is it true, that in a bad war we cannot stop too soon. The consequences of persistence are so awful that the considerate mind stands appalled before them. And I here declare my deep conviction, that the imperial voice of duty, and the clearest dictates of common prudence require that the government of the United States, *immediately* recognize the independence of the

Confederate States, and form with them such treaties of amity and commerce, on just principles, as will be mutually beneficial. Not another gun should be fired, not another life sacrificed, nor another dollar wasted, until we have expressed a willingness thus to treat. This, however, will only secure peace with the confederates. It will neither restore the violated liberties of the remaining States, nor will it insure domestic peace at home. We must go farther and abandon the fatal doctrine of the coercion of States, and concede the right of secession. This only will restore our government to its true and original principles of *State Freedom*. This alone will save the North from the infinite catastrophe of consolidation, with its inevitable consequence, the utter disintegration of what remains of the old Union.

If you reply that we cannot stop until our arms are indisputably victorious, you make your cause no better than that of the common pugilist, who struggles *only* for victory.

The Chicago Daily *Tribune*, of Dec. 27, 1862, says: "If we would have peace the conditions of which would not burn in to the national sensibility like a hot iron into bare flesh, we must fight on until the errors of two campaigns are atoned for by victories which shall attest the valor of Northern arms."

But the editor attests the insincerity of even this unworthy motive, in the very next passage, in which he adds: "When such are gained, there is but another step to the attainment of all that has been asked, a *conquest* that will leave the enemy nothing but quick *submission to the law*."

Thus is a bleeding country led along and betrayed to ruin, by incompetent, self-deluded, malignant and treacherous newspapers.

Besides, we can win no glory in a contest with the South in any event. The disparity of numbers between the forces of the "Union," and those of secession, being, as a war speaker recently estimated, five millions of armsbearing men, to less than *one*, is so great, that if you could conquer, it would only be, in public estimation, the glory of a large man whipping a small boy; and where would be our military prestige if we should happen not to conquer them at all?

But gentlemen, you will *not* be successful in this unworthy object. Every successive step in the pursuit of military prestige will be followed by a deeper humiliation. Even your appeal to the Negro slave to aid you in your despair, not, as you protest,

in order to secure *his* freedom, but to subjugate his master, will be the last and most effective act in the great drama of our national humiliation. Disclaiming all motives of philanthropy, and officially assuring the governments of the civilized world, that the proclamation in regard to emancipation, is a mere military expedient to subdue the rebellion; we not only preclude the favor of Heaven, but forfeit the sympathies of mankind and the respect of surrounding nations. The very process itself is humiliating and utterly unworthy the self-respect of a great nation. With a numerical majority truly frightful, and an animus one would think vigorous enough to effect any possibility, after two years of desolation, blood and ruin, we find ourselves baffled by an unconquerable foe; then in the face of all our expressed sentiments to the contrary, we descend to the disgraceful course of appealing to their domestics to become our treacherous allies, and if need be to massacre and exterminate the whole southern white population! The scheme will not bear the test of true philanthropy for a moment.

Gentlemen, deprecate it as you may; resist it, as perhaps you will, the only possible end of this unfortunate attempt to subjugate one part of the old Union to the dominion of the other, will be national humiliation, and the utter disappointment of every specific lust which has animated the enterprise. Look at the distraction and imbecility in your councils, the treachery and discouragement in your ranks, and the almost unbroken series of adverse providences and national calamities! See your ragged and half starved antagonists constantly repelling and slaughtering your well clad and thoroughly equipped legions! What is the cause of this surprising result? Is it the lack of valor in your Northern troops? As a Northerner I repel the insinuation. In my humble judgment, a more valiant and capable class of young men never formed an army, than have been poured upon the South to subject that unhappy people. No! But you have sent these devoted victims of popular error, to do battle against an eternal principle. You have dashed them against the throne of the Eternal! God and right have been your antagonists from the beginning. Your vast armies have not been overthrown and wasted by the superior valor of your antagonists, but by the superior merits of their cause. You have been defeated by *truth*, and not by physical force. It is on this principle only that

you can successfully vindicate the valor of your army. Your enterprise does not involve the elements of heroism, nor the requisite stimulant to valor. After the sacrifice of a quarter of a million of our citizenis, you have not made a single hero yet—not even a candidate for the presidency; while your antagonists abound in distinguished chieftans whose fame already fills the world. The reason is obvious. They fight for an undying truth; you for a selfish expedient. They defend their homes from invasion, and themselves from political slavery. You fight for territory and governmental prerogative. Explore the whole field of history, and you will find that no general ever won renown in a war to put down a so-called, “rebellion.” It is generally the odious task of the menials of despotic power.

Even now, if our government would gracefully yield to the divine majesty of truth, and concede the right of Independance, we should recover our magnanimity and moral dignity, and should lay a firm foundation for lasting peace, and national well-being. Ah! my fellow men, we forget that our legitimate destiny and true glory consists, not in an ignoble strife for military pre-eminence, but in the development of the moral and social virtues, and the promotion of those great interests of beneficent industry, which carry peace and happiness to the humblest cottage, and glory to the loftiest palace. For years past I have observed with sad forebodings the frightful predominance of the material and sensual, over the spiritual and moral in the aspirations of the American character. When dollars are preferred to virtue and gratification to manhood, war will be preferred to peace, and destruction repel prosperity.

Let us then, as genuine patriots, cultivate the moral virtues of peace, magnanimity and true philanthropy, and whatever contributes to elevate the national character, and make the people prosperous and happy. Away then with the sentiment that we must “fight out this war, right or wrong!” I would much rather be charged with treason against a misguided and demented administration and people, than be *guilty* of treason against God, my country and the principles of Eternal Justice.



